

## Chapter 635

Mac's head whipped around in surprise as Liam gave his friend a nod. "You're empathic? You never told me that."

"You never asked," Karn countered with a grin. "And why would I? We all keep our skills to ourselves. Perhaps that's why they're so diluted now. We're all so busy trying to be the biggest badass around that sharing unique talents has never been in our best interests. How the hell do you think I've managed to keep this motley crew in line for so long, Mac?"*www.novelworld.com*

It was a rhetorical question but the leader of the Praetorian's answered anyway. "You've had an inkling of what they were thinking or feeling."

"Feeling," his friend confirmed. "When you can sense emotions it's easier to divert the ones you don't want to be predominant in any given situation." Mac looked stunned and a bit put out at only now learning what his second in command could do, but Karn was unrepentant. If this new knowledge of shadow walking hadn't materialised, he would have kept his mouth shut about his abilities.

"I have no objections to you observing, Karn," Liam said, his lips curling in a small smile. "The more people who can hone their skills the better." He glanced at the woman at his side before turning back to the waiting vampires. "Should we make a start?"

With a concerned expression Mac nodded and motioned for them to head upstairs to the infirmary.

"You doubt we will be successful," Reasa commented as she passed him, feeling oddly comfortable in his presence. He reminded her of Louis a little, with perhaps a tad less of a cruel streak in his eyes. She didn't doubt for a moment that the Praetorian leader wasn't capable of cruelty, just that he was less inclined to veer in that direction.*www.novelworld.com*

"Brandon is close to Lily's heart. If you try this and fail, her heart will break. In saying that, this is the lesser of two evils so I am willing to give it a try."

She could understand his position, and hoped they could affect a positive change on the vampires. There was a lot at stake, not only the hopes of all those who cared for the injured, but also the mental well-being of the Vârcolac at her side. There was no accounting for what Liam would do if they failed. It didn't bear thinking about.

Reasa tried to convince herself that it was the emotional backlash of Liam's powers that concerned her, but she knew she was lying to herself. Though it was a strong factor to be considered, the kiss she had shared with Liam was still very firmly emblazoned in her memory. She should have been furious about the liberty he'd taken, and a part of her was, but mostly she longed for another taste of his lips, to see if his kiss had truly been as amazing as her memory told her it was. Shaking the memory from her mind as best she could, Reasa entered the door to the large infirmary, her gaze quickly sweeping the area.

Beside the very first bed that came into view stood Elina gazing down at the dark-haired male lying there. For all intents and purposes he gave off the appearance of being dead. Her expression was neutral, no sign of her inner thoughts as she watched the male for a moment longer and then walked gracefully over to the nearby window to rest against the window seat facing into the room.

Sitting in a comfy armchair beside the bed was Lily, a book in hand that she was reading out loud to the sleeping male. At their entrance, the Vârcolac finished the paragraph she was reading and then turned grave eyes to them. "I hate this book but it's one of Brandon's favourites. Please wake him up so he can finish the damned thing himself."

Lily rose from the chair, smiling a sad smile as she dropped a kiss on Brandon's forehead. "See you soon, Bran."

She walked across to them, slipping effortlessly into Liam's waiting arms. For a moment they just hugged quietly and then Lily straightened and stepped back, acceptance in her expression. "I know you will do your very best, Liam. Don't do anything that endangers you though, not for Brandon, and not for the others. They were your protectors and they wouldn't want you to do anything that caused you harm. Keep that firmly in mind." She was silently granting forgiveness in advance... should they fail at their task.

Liam nodded solemnly, guilt threatening to overwhelm him again. He was the reason six souls lay trapped or destroyed within their host bodies, and his beautiful friend was granting him absolution if he couldn't rectify his grievous error. He didn't deserve it and he wouldn't fail. He would stay there for however long it took to bring each and every one of the injured vampires back.

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"I think you should go be somewhere else, Lily," he answered, his gaze dropping to her abdomen. "I have no idea how much, if any, emotional leakage will seep into the room as we try this. It would probably be best if you weren't present as a precaution."

"I don't want to leave Brandon..." Lily started to say, her gaze sweeping back to her friend as she spoke. Her mate was already moving though to gather her up against his chest and pull her towards the doorway.

"You heard Liam, this has never been done before and we don't know what may happen. I will not countenance any harm coming to you or our daughter, Liliana."

She knew she couldn't argue with Mac. She didn't have any intention of it. It was right that she shouldn't be around so much empathy right now and she would never do anything to risk their child. As if she would even consider causing her mate to, once more, lose the most precious thing in his world. "You never let me finish," she smiled up at Mac, sending soothing love down their mate bond. "I had been about to say I didn't want to leave Brandon but it would be best if I wasn't around such charged emotions. I'm not completely stupid, my love."

His frown lightened and then his expression turned sheepish. "Overreacting again, uh?"

Though his words were conciliatory, his tone was implacable and brought a loving smile to her face as she gave him a reassuring hug. "It's understandable. Let me know if there is any improvement."

Mac kissed his mate, long and slow, giving her as much love and reassurance as he could. He was aware that her heart was breaking and she was afraid to hope for a good outcome. He wanted to tell her it would all be okay but he truly didn't know if it would. He finally raised his head and cupped her cheek tenderly. "You'll be the first to know, my Lily Rose."

Satisfied, the pregnant Vârcolac headed from the room, leaving everyone staring quietly at Brandon for a long moment.*www.novelworld.com*

"I think it's best if we try this on Brandon first," Liam finally broke the silence. It appeared the expectation was there from the Praetorians that his friend was to be the first attempt anyway, so he was merely formalising the thought. "We need another comfortable chair. I don't know how long this may take."

Karn left the room and Elina came forward to look up at her cousin. "I can shield the room as you work. It won't be the best of shields as I'll need to cast it across everyone present, but it should help if there is some emotional leakage."